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SUBJECT: TIMOR-LESTE: SAME-SEX DOMESTIC PARTNER ACCREDITATION

REF: STATE 788

¶1. (SBU) In response to reftel demarche, Ambassador Amorim Dias, National Director for Protocol, Consular, and Legal Affairs at the MFA told the DCM in a February 1 meeting that he did not anticipate any problem with the GOTL accrediting same-sex partners of U.S. diplomats assigned to Timor-Leste. Dias noted, in fact, that there have already been one or two precedents for such a course of action within the diplomatic community in Dili. He cautioned, however, that his view is based on his initial personal assessment and is not based on a comprehensive legal analysis of the issue.

¶2. (SBU) To the best of our knowledge, the decision on accreditation of same-sex partners in Timor-Leste rests solely with the MFA. Permission for same-sex partners to seek local employment may, of course, involve other GOTL agencies.

¶3. (SBU) Comment: Post believes that there is unlikely to be a major problem with the accreditation of same-sex partners as long as the issue is handled discreetly and below the political radar screen. On the other hand, Timor-Leste is an overwhelmingly Catholic and socially conservative country. Should this issue achieve a higher profile or be publicly discussed, it is quite possible that Catholic Church leaders might intervene and complicate any such accommodation.

KLEMM